



CURT GUNTHER/STEVEN GUNTHER ESTATE PHOTO

Author tells about accompanying The Beatles 50 years ago on first U.S. tour

By **DAVE MASON**
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Ivor Davis was having a hard day's night. He was sitting in a limousine in Cleveland, and a mob of young women was furiously pounding on the tinted windows and doors. They climbed on the hood, unaware the passengers were reporters, not music icons. "I screamed, 'We're not The Beatles!'" Mr. Davis, 75, said 50 years later in his Ventura home. "It didn't make a difference. If they had got in, they probably would have torn me from limb to limb! It was more dangerous than a safari. At least you can talk sense to lions."

The insanity persisted during the five weeks in August and September 1964 when Mr. Davis, then the West Coast correspondent for the London-based Daily Express, traveled with The Beatles on their first tour in the U.S. and Canada. Mr. Davis writes about it in "The Beatles and Me On Tour" (Cockney Kid Publishing, \$15.99). The book is scheduled to be released nationally Aug. 1.

Mr. Davis, a London native and Beverly Hills resident at the time, was working for Reuters news agency when the Daily Express hired him in 1964. His editor sent him to meet The Beatles when they landed in August at San Francisco International Airport. "The editor said, 'Go on tour with them, travel with them, hang out with them, report on them,'" said Mr. Davis, who stayed in rooms on the same hotel floors as the group. "So off I went, never realizing that all hell was going to break loose."

He recalled the tour's opening concert Aug. 19, 1964, at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. "They got up and sang. There were 17,000 people, and nobody heard a word because everybody was screaming from start to finish. People tossed jelly beans (at the stage), and they kept hitting me in the front row." Fans had erroneously heard The Beatles loved jelly beans.

The craziness continued during the rest of the five-week tour, during which The Beatles performed in 25 cities — everywhere from Cleveland, Ohio, where police temporarily stopped the concert because of the unruly crowd, to Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Toronto and Seattle.

He recalled a rowdy outdoor concert in New Orleans. "Cops didn't know how to handle it. They started galloping on horseback to stop the kids from going on stage." Ambulances picked up young women who were injured by the horses. "It was pretty bloody, pretty scary." The tour wrapped up Sept. 20, 1964, in New York City.

"It was kind of a blitzkrieg. Everywhere we went was insanity," Mr. Davis said. He recalled concerts where young women climbed onto the stage and wrapped their arms around the legs of John Lennon, who simply kept performing.

The Beatles typically played just a half-hour's worth of music, including "I Want to Hold Your Hand," "She Loves You" and "Can't Buy Me Love," plus Chuck Berry and Little Richard songs. As fans waited for the encore that The Beatles never performed, the lads from Liverpool made their escape, sometimes in ambulances, refrigerated meat trucks or paddy wagons, Mr. Davis said.

FYI

"The Beatles and Me On Tour" by Ventura reporter Ivor Davis (Cockney Kid Publishing, \$15.99) will be released Aug. 1. For more information, go to www.ivoradavisbeatles.com.

Determined female fans hid in room service carts to get into The Beatles' hotel room. Mr. Davis recalled the fire department once helped a woman who got stuck crawling through an air conditioning vent. And the reporter found three women hiding in his hotel room's closet.

"There were beautiful women who wanted to hang out with them and beautiful women who wanted to sleep with them," Mr. Davis said. "And they were all healthy, young bachelors with libidos except John Lennon, who was married (to his first wife, Cynthia Lennon). Brian Epstein (the manager) tried to keep that hidden. Brian Epstein wanted America to believe they were four boys who could be the object of their affection."

The author remembered the singers, pumped up by their own adrenaline plus uppers, staying up all night after each concert. He said he and others played Monopoly with them (Mr. Lennon cheated) and poker (Mr. Lennon was lousy at it). The Beatles typically had corn flakes and fried eggs at 1 a.m. in their hotel suite and drank rum and cokes as well as whiskey mixed with various sodas.

"You couldn't keep up with them. They had boundless energy," Mr. Davis said.



RON JOY-BELLE SCHWARTZ ESTATE PHOTO

Ivor Davis, left, a Daily Express reporter who accompanied The Beatles, ghost-wrote a column credited to George Harrison during the tour. At top, from left, Ringo Starr, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison ride in a limousine. Sometimes they sneaked off from concerts in ambulances or meat trucks.

He recalled when he went with the band and sexy movie star Jayne Mansfield to the Whisky a Go Go in West Hollywood. A drunk George Harrison got upset with a photographer who kept taking pictures and tried to throw his drink at him. Instead, Mr. Harrison's drink landed on another, nearby beautiful actress — a rival of Ms. Mansfield. She and The Beatles hurried out of there.

Usually, Mr. Harrison was quiet. That posed a challenge for Mr. Davis, who was ghost-writing a column with the Beatle's byline for the Daily Express. Finally, Mr. Davis got him to talk.

"Paul (McCartney) was the most sociable, knew all about PR, could schmooze you and would say, 'Hi, Ivor, how is it going today?'" Mr. Davis recalled. "John was a bit more outrageous, and he wouldn't cozy up to you." He added Mr. Lennon had a "wicked wit."

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CARMEN SMYTH/NEWS-PRESS

Ivor Davis attended Ringo Starr and His All-Starr Band's recent concert at the Santa Barbara Bowl. The Ventura author of "The Beatles and Me On Tour" (Cockney Kid Publishing, \$15.99) last saw Mr. Starr perform with The Beatles in 1966.



EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS PHOTOS

The Beatles perform at a sold-out concert in Seattle. Fans screamed so loudly from start to finish at each concert that it was impossible to hear the songs, Mr. Davis recalled. Below, The Beatles fish from the Edgewater Hotel in Seattle.

'Enjoying the candy store'

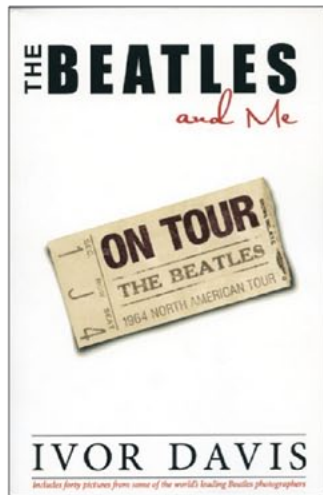
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"Ringo was fairly simple in those days. What you saw of Ringo was what you got, which was a young man invited to play in America and was enjoying the candy store and everything in it."

His book tells about The Beatles meeting Bob Dylan, who introduced them to marijuana, and in a return visit to the U.S. in 1965, their awkward encounter with Elvis Presley in his Bel-Air home. Jealous of The Beatles' success, The King wasn't warm toward the Fab Four. But Mr. Davis said he saw things loosen up after guitars were passed out and The Beatles and Mr. Presley had an impromptu jam session.

After covering The Beatles, Mr. Davis reported on other stars for the Daily Express, the Times in London and finally as a freelance writer with a weekly column for The New York Times Syndicate. (He also wrote for Los Angeles Magazine.) He and



his late wife, Sally Davis, also a journalist, moved to Ventura from Malibu in 1980, and today their son lives in Ventura and a daughter is in Seattle.

Mr. Davis said only a few celebrities have impressed him as easygoing people who weren't self-important. Among them were The Beatles.

"They were easy to talk to. Like a good friend, you could have a good conversation, not speak to them for a day or two, and pick up the conversation again from where you left off. With The Beatles, you wanted to hang out with them."

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